

small fish BIG LANDSCAPE

small fish BIG LANDSCAPE started as an exploration of the houses, trees, power lines, mountains and sky in the Northern Canadian landscape, through the lens of lockdowns, travel restrictions, masks, and social distancing. If you are not going anywhere, you bring the world to you. You look at what you have and you make it your world.

In early 2020 the world went into lockdown – concerts, festivals, galleries, and performances were cancelled or closed. But art making continued. I went to my studio every day, adding to a body of work that, for the time being, had no place to go. There is something freeing in this process. No deadlines, no promises to deliver, no imagined theme to stick to. Soon paintings had ovals or dots flying through landscapes, at first subdued, then with forceful confidence. There is no narrative here, no words and no figures. The paintings have an energetic newness that make me happy.

Three years on I am still living with the growth of these pieces. I have learned to see in new ways. I found the monumentalism in the everyday, and navigated the creative tension at the intersection of realism and abstraction.

I have found a way to make the landscape dance.

Suzo Hickey

I am a painter living in Prince Rupert, BC. I migrated from coast (Prince Rupert) to desert (Kamloops) and back to coast (Vancouver) in 1991, attending Emily Carr College of Art and Design. Since graduating in 1994, I have exhibited in BC and the US on themes of queer mothering, urban landscapes, and death in the family. My work has always been informed by the specifics of my life: the death of my 24-year-old son in *Mirificus*, stereotyping in *You Fucking Fruit*, queer motherhood in *Let Me Go Down in the Mud*.

In 2008 my work became urban landscape. After constructing shows around issues, I began examining the formal, enigmatic power of what was around me: the ordinariness of rainy intersections and leafless trees in my East Vancouver neighbourhood.

In 2016 I moved back to my hometown of Prince Rupert. Continuing my exploration of my urban surroundings, my work turned another corner. I began layering northern landscapes of light and weather over elaborate underpaintings, sometimes stripping away the urban in favour of rugged mountain vistas. In many ways, this work is an homage to my own cultural history, recognizing the antecedents as a Canadian painter, experiencing the joy of manipulating paint in the landscape.